



CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
**Department of Planning & Growth Management**

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## MEETING SUMMARY

### **OLDCC Military Installation Resilience Review Grant – Regional Collaboration Forum #2**

**December 16, 2021, 9 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**

#### **Overview**

Beth Groth, Charles County Government OLDCC Project Leader, welcomed everyone and then did introductions of representatives from OLDCC grantees. Beth described the agenda for the meeting and then turned it over to Scott Spencer from OLDCC to provide program updates. Scott Spencer spoke about BRIC and other funding programs coming available.

#### **Infrastructure Bill**

Kanti Srikanth, MWCOG Deputy Executive Director, provided update on the infrastructure bill. Please see memos distributed for the meeting. MWCOG is tracking federal actions and will continue to keep us updated but also welcomed others to share their information. It is known as Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Law. The bill signed a month ago (HR-3684). It has to be enacted and the total bill is \$1.2T and that money will be provided over 5-10 fiscal years from 2022-2026. FY2022 has already started. They will have to figure out how they will have to change their programs via the federal register for changes and updates to program to reflect the bill.

This is not a one-time stimulus funding, but funding for several years. Of the \$1.2T, \$650B is to continue existing federal programs. That amount of money will continue for next five years. For example, USDOT funding will be provided for next five years. About \$550B is new money creating brand new programs within several agencies such as USDA, DOC, DOE, DHS, DOI, DOT, EPA.

The FHWA has a website dedicated to this topic and may be accessed at: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/>

The summary tab has a very informative slide deck that can be accessed at: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/summary.cfm>

The FTA has a website dedicated to this topic and may be accessed at: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/BID>

#### **Memo #1 – Focus on Environmental Programs**

- \$550B in new money majority of it goes to transportation
- \$47B for resilience
- \$21B for pollution remediation
- \$8B for water infrastructure (western)
- \$55B for water infrastructure (rest of country)

- Types of projects summarized such as follows:
  - Transportation program for carbon reduction for roads and bridges – resilience.
  - PROTECT – promoting resilience operations for transformative efficient and cost saving transportation program (new program – details still pending).
  - Programs focused on charging EV.
- DOE programs
  - Electric grid resiliency grant
  - Weatherization assistance program – reduces energy costs for low-income households.
- FEMA – STORM Act - focused on resilient infrastructure and BRIC competitive grant for building resiliency in communities

#### Memo #2 – Changes in the Transportation Programs

- Increases in funding for bridges that aren't on national highway system.
- Increased funding for non-driving program.
- New program for mega projects
- Reconnecting communities' program
- Memo has 21 different items with increased or brand-new money
- COG region's Transportation Planning Board has recently done some good work on equity, see: <https://www.mwcog.org/transportation/planning-areas/fairness-and-accessibility/environmental-justice/equity-emphasis-areas/>

#### **Questions/Comments for Infrastructure Bill Discussion:**

- What can towns/cities/counties do to get ready for funding opportunities in this bill? How do localities devote resources to capacity building? How do localities prepare for additional resources and to execute projects?
- Some things in law must be promulgated within 90 days. The feds have to announce some of them in 90 days but others are brand new and won't be subject to 90-day statute. They are working to define new programs. States will get a guaranteed amount for each state using a formula. Population will probably be part of the formula. Likely they will use 2020 census for that distribution. States will definitely get existing and new money. We can reach out to state partners. How can we partner together?
- The other way is made available through competitive grants – depending on scope of project and grant, it may serve us better to use OLDCC group to go after grant. If the grant requires match, consider providing additional match to be more competitive. If we pull resources together with a larger group, opportunity to make us more competitive.
- Look at Hazard Mitigation and Comprehensive Plans to position your communities to take advantage of funding opportunities. Example is BRIC, they like to see more match which makes you more attractive.
- Will MWCOG be tracking progress on how municipalities can tap into funding?
- We should be able to draw from OLDCC MIRR projects and help any future proposals.
- Within COG, some of the different departments will likely be looking at the various programs.
- Equity is at the center of almost of the programs for infrastructure bill. Even existing programs are being revamped to have equity integration. Through the focus on mitigating and adapting to climate change, the multi-sectoral programs are coming into focus and is a highlight in terms of what the bill offers.
- Federal reviewers need to be open to innovative project ideas and go beyond just traditional projects.

**FEMA BRIC Briefing: Josh Human** - [josh.human@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:josh.human@fema.dhs.gov)

General BRIC overview <https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities>

Scoring criteria along with several other informational support materials.

FEMA BCA <https://www.fema.gov/grants/guidance-tools/benefit-cost-analysis>

See FEMA presentation for more details on this funding opportunity.

- Look at BRIC as a resilience program to enhance local capacity. With BRIC you can go up to \$50M, so now you can think more about resilience. Trying to support community capacity.
- Encouraging innovation. Looking for system-based mitigation and promoting partnerships. Connected with REPI to extend the dollars in BRIC and across federal and state agencies.
- Enabling large infrastructure is looking at multi-faceted level. Think outside of the box to not just fix the disaster but go beyond.
- Want to maintain their flexibility since they are a new program. They have changed their scoring to include equity and climate change.
- BRIC eligibility includes all 50 states, tribes, DC, etc. Local governments go through these entities as the sub-applicant. State sends to FEMA for review.
- Funding overview – last year \$500M program. Now \$1B available in various categories. States can do their own programming for \$1M and then a tribal set-aside to get more tribes involved. Beyond set-aside then \$919M goes into a competitive pot.
- A few other programs at FEMA, such as the non-financial direct technical assistance program, are available. Hand holds to build their own capacity to understand mitigation planning and project prioritization. This year up to 20 communities.
- Listing of eligibility activities is encouraging people to scope projects like engineering, communication, etc. you can get funding to do project scoping. Pushing for building code activities. Trying to influence behavior across the country.
- How to apply for BRIC – the cycle closes in January. Links in chat. Must use FEMA GO portal to apply.
- Other programs – Flood mitigation assistance program has gotten more money with an additional \$3.5B from Infrastructure Bill to spend over next five years. A lot of money coming through for HMA branch.

***Questions/Comments for FEMA BRIC Discussion:***

- Cost effectiveness- efficiency and cost benefit are different things. What are criteria FEMA uses to determine if a cost/benefit is needed. What works in one community may not work in another community. FEMA is expanding programs with more dollars and they are trying to look at more benefits. They have standardized cost benefit ratio (BCR) that may be archaic in methods that are geared toward infrastructure-based projects. How do we capture nature-based solutions? BC and BCR models need to allow for capture of benefits? FEMA recognizes need to look at this more. BCR is not a BRIC thing but a FEMA tool.
- Are there opportunities for communities to have a conversation with FEMA about this? Example, relationships that are so important may not show up in cost/benefit tool. FEMA has technical and qualitative criteria so it's a way around the BC not giving credit for certain things not always captured.
- As we look at flood mitigation measures, how can BRIC or other federal programs be leveraged? Regional solutions for addressing resiliency and plan or add adaptation without a federal partner? Could they be a partner? Answer – yes, FEMA gives points for partnerships with local community and that's encouraged. Can work be done on federal property? Yes. Looking at base and outside base as partnerships like the one with REPI.
- How can ground level organizations push their municipalities to apply? These community organizations often have very little money to visualize issue but due to politics of states, etc. they cannot ask for help directly. Is

there a mechanism for small organizations to sidestep the politics of what they can ask for and do a cost/benefit analysis? Answer – The Direct Technical Assistance program is a good option for this situation.

### **MARISA Report on Co-benefits of Installation and Community Resilience**

From Krista Romita Grocholski, RAND

[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR3014.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3014.html)

It is a case study of Hampton Roads and available to download or purchase. It's how militaries and local governments can work together to build resilience.

### **Army Corps of Engineers**

Tony Clark (USACE)

Corps has a technical assistance program. Planning assistance to states: flood, stream, water supply, storms. 50/50 cost share typically.

Technical Assistance Programs with the US Army Corps of Engineers:

<https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/technical-services/>

(410) 962-3413

[anthony.a.clark@usace.army.mil](mailto:anthony.a.clark@usace.army.mil)

### **Case Study – Low Country, South Carolina**

Presentation by Stephanie Rossi, Planning Director, Low Country, COG [srossi@lowcountrycog.org](mailto:srossi@lowcountrycog.org)  
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See slides that will be posted on Low Country website soon: <https://www.lowcountrycog.org>

- Down at bottom of SC and elevation is just above sea level. Two-thirds of area is in floodplain. They are about 40 miles north of Savannah. Known for Hilton Head Island. Focus of project is on “North of Broad” which separates area in two. Historic and rural communities in north and Hilton Head, box stores, gated communities in the south.
- Military installation – air station – family housing but not a lot on base. Marine Corps Paris Island – 8,000 acres with more than half being marshland. Area has history of planning with military (JLUS studies). Large amount of cooperation with air station. TOD with bases and community.
- Sea Level Rise (SLR) study – much of supporting infrastructure for base is coming from local communities like water and sewer, roadways, and highways. Goal of project was documenting vulnerabilities.
- SLR study was initial assessment looking at exposure risk and vulnerability – how can risks be mitigated. Highlighted infrastructure risk. Did not look at storm inundation. Did not delve into green infrastructure or habitat. Traditional gray infrastructure only.
- Threat to most infrastructure greatly increased in 2040 – transportation was most vulnerable. Stormwater is next tier identified.
- Looked at costs for adaptive measures. Looked generally not specific. Did not look at each location at what a typical adaptive measure would cost.

- Low Country Installation MIRR – SLR study went into MIRR that allowed specificity. Kicked off in March this past year. Project included probability assessment and the development of a list of recommendations and implementation plan. Building on existing plans.
- Pointing to evidence is key tool – SLR shows in geology and ecology.
- Shared information with stakeholders and had conversations about assets and services along with threats. Discussed compound threats with community. Looked at socio-economic aspects.
- Vision is important with resilience. What can we do to add value that is momentous?
- Show community that when you are engaged, that data exists. Connect back to the habitat.

### OLDCC Grantee Roundtable Updates

**Charles County update** on where they are on grant. Key points are as follows:

- Focused on installation at Indian Head.
- Work has been guided by concentric teams to hear from multiple members of community.
- Working closely with town and county through our leadership team.
- Work through an internal team on regular basis and then we open up to an external team of cross disciplines. There are many meetings and discussions. Through these meetings, this is how we find out what's going on with base.
- Information – how we get it and how we use it? What goes on at military base is different than what goes on in community. Important when talking about infrastructure.
- There is a lot of engagement between defense installations and communities.
- How the installation processes and distributes information is different so team struggled with this at first. Team figured out a way to focus conversations on the community and then brought the military into that conversation. It addressed how to handle the difference in information. Still figuring it out but team feels they are getting what they need.
- Very interested in DC MWCOG project with all of the data.
- **MWCOG update** – Wrapping up their vulnerability assessment on four bases within the District. At an advantage because all four installations are in vicinity. In District, a lot of projections had been done already. Much was learned from site assessments as well. Understanding how close collaboration is happening between bases and communities. How do they communicate with key stakeholders – they have learned a lot so far.
- Relationship building – put together key installation contacts who meet more frequently than anyone else so they work on things before they stall process. They also have an NDA in place where needed. Recently did site visits that improved relationship building and confirmed data they had is data they need.
- 3 phases in project – 1<sup>st</sup> phase is scoping and services provided that have high significance. Tiers of hazards (flooding). 2<sup>nd</sup> was vulnerability assessment (land use types and overlay with key infrastructure to assess vulnerability. This process is completed and can be shared in future. Now launching into 3<sup>rd</sup> phase. What actions can be taken to address vulnerabilities?
- Stakeholder engagement was more macro analysis that desk analysis can't provide. Some past events from years ago nobody was there for that so no oral history for that but in community, there is perspective. Desk analysis together with stakeholder engagement provides a rich picture. Also important is equity in this analysis.
- How can we continue these relationships past the project and when these OLDCC projects end, how can we keep this process going as there is strong partnerships coming from this project? Thinking about this moving forward.
- **Annapolis/Anne Arundel County/Stantec update** – completed climate adaptation plan in November. Information cannot be shared yet but maybe in the future. It would be nice to have information from installation to help these projects, but they are trying to focus on community. Initial focus is helping community to help risk and hazards and hopefully that mirrors what's important to installation. The resilience elements from master plan will be helpful at some point as it's not public information now.

- Beth Groth from Charles County closed out the meeting and said the next proposed meeting date is March 3, 2022.

**Next Steps/Action Items:**

- The next meeting has been scheduled for March 3<sup>rd</sup> from approximately 9 a.m. until 12 p.m., and an appointment will be sent out soon.
- Please email any suggestions you may have for topics, speakers, etc. for future meeting agendas. As always, suggestions should be sent to Beth Groth at [GrothB@CharlesCountyMD.gov](mailto:GrothB@CharlesCountyMD.gov).